

*It Takes All  
Kinds  
A Literary Zine*



*Issue Number 8*

Hello, and welcome to Issue 8 of It Takes All Kinds!

This is the third month of running a monthly zine, and I've been looking at it as an experiment. The first 'season,' so to speak, ran quarterly. As things evolve, both literary and in my personal life, the zine may once again become quarterly. Any changes will be noted both on the FB page and on the website.

Submissions are still open, and accepted on a rolling basis. The submission guidelines page is the best source for information.

There's a lot of amazing work in this issue, so I hope you enjoy it!

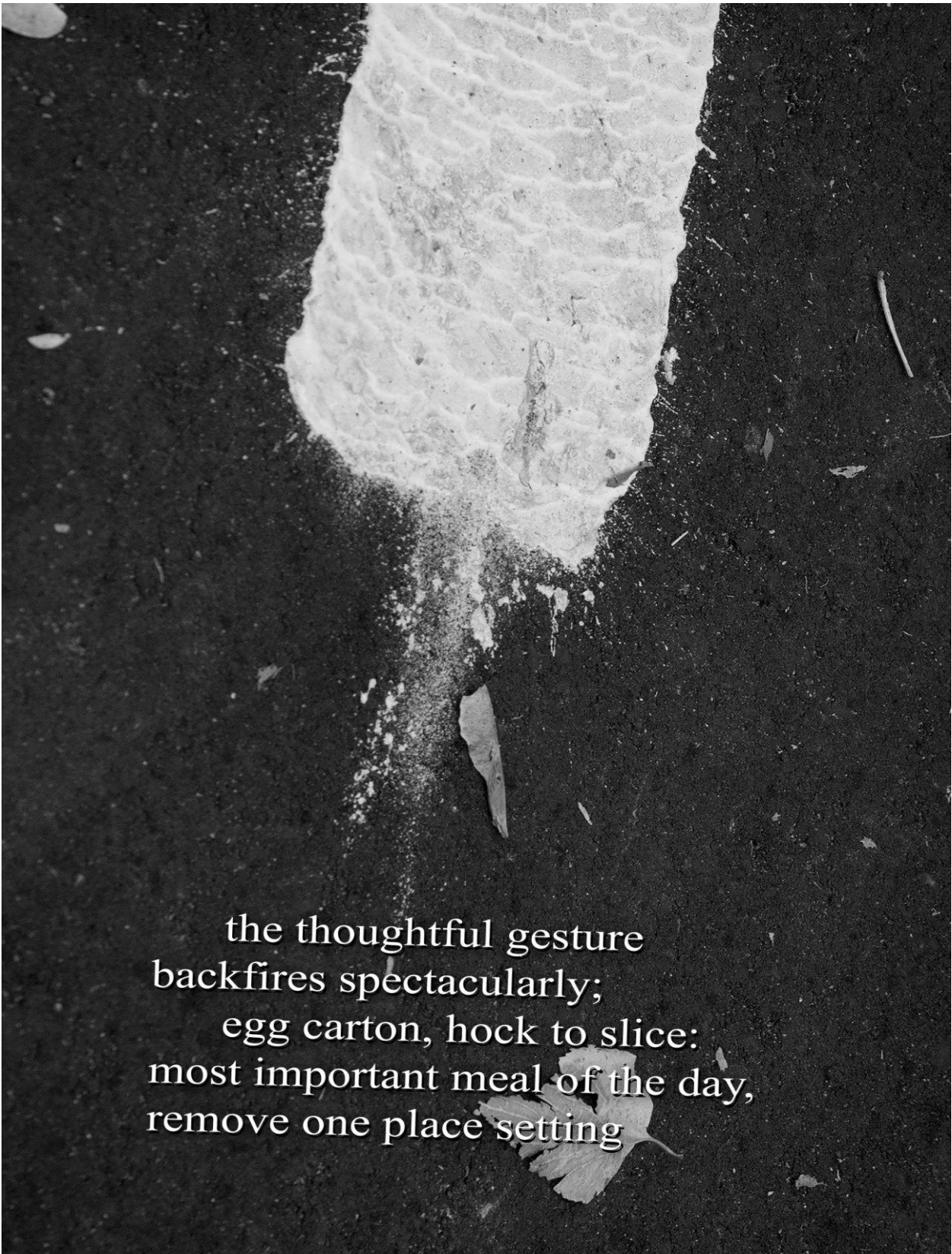
Skaja  
September 2022

Note: Cover image by John Patrick Robbins.

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Image by Skaja Evens



the thoughtful gesture  
backfires spectacularly;  
egg carton, hock to slice:  
most important meal of the day,  
remove one place setting

Tanka by Jerome Berglund



## Cherry

By Lauren Scharhag

You know if wild cherries are safe to eat  
by crushing their leaves.

If they smell of bitter almonds,  
you may eat,  
but not too many.

Consider all the creatures  
who feast on this red fruit.

Consider the stone heart.

Hold it in your mouth,  
poison buried in sweetness.

Pretty, pretty poison,  
petals of white and pink.

Build your tolerance.

Shell and boil the seeds  
to release more sweetness.

Use it to thicken stews  
or bake sweet bread.

Chew the resin. Brew tea.

Boil the bark  
for its medicinal properties.

Anoint your wounds  
with its dried root.

Poison and sweetness  
and nourishment and beauty  
and healing, all held within  
a single dendrologic specimen.

Tie a knot in the stem.

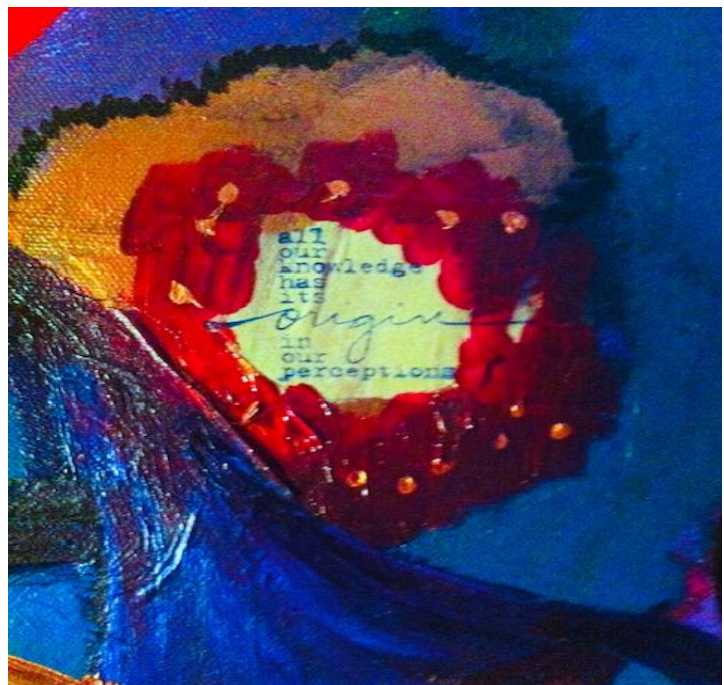
Emergence from the forest,  
hands and mouth stained crimson.

We could only hope  
to offer so much to so many.

Bury your dead in its shade.

Fill your pockets with seeds.

Go forth and sow.



Images: Sunflowers by Trina McDaniel;  
Perceptions by Skaja Evens

Notes (capricious & even more incidental)  
By Alex Z. Salinas

Thursday, Jan. 20, 10:35 a.m.—San Antonio, TX

Writing poetry, like biting into a toasted bagel, swallowing the bullet-pill of death (choose the blue pill—no, the red pill), is a singular act in a poorly lit auditorium filled with chilled air.

Beside you, your shadow & pen. That's it. What one calls passion, I call cold-skinned intensity. Trust me, I usually run hot. (But why so serious? Please refrain from answering, Heath.)

It's terrifying. They want other ears in on the finished products, knowing perfectly well of their imperfect frames, the edges of which sprout scurrying little legs.

Off they go. To the races. Inside your head. Try stopping them. Are you warmed up yet?

Do we really overcome fears as they grow & contract with our bones? I close my eyes and my world blacks out, but I swear anything is prepared to replace the image, refill the frame. Is somebody doing gymnastics upstairs?

The best we may hope for is a warm bed. I've seen it enough times in this country, the one pouring from my dreams into a new cartridge, where everything's possible. Well, almost everything.

The red seats (with the red pills), vacant (obviously), are provocative in their own right. To write toward death without anyone breathing down your neck does not make you a provocateur. That's what happy endings are for. The shimmering orange sinking in the storybook west. The land of everyone. Of unlucky shadows & feather-lipped saboteurs.

Hope is happiness in purgatory, am I right? A chamberless holding bay. Muzak on loop. Lemniscate curves. Lazy eights. Crazy 88. As the Brits say: Where's the queue?

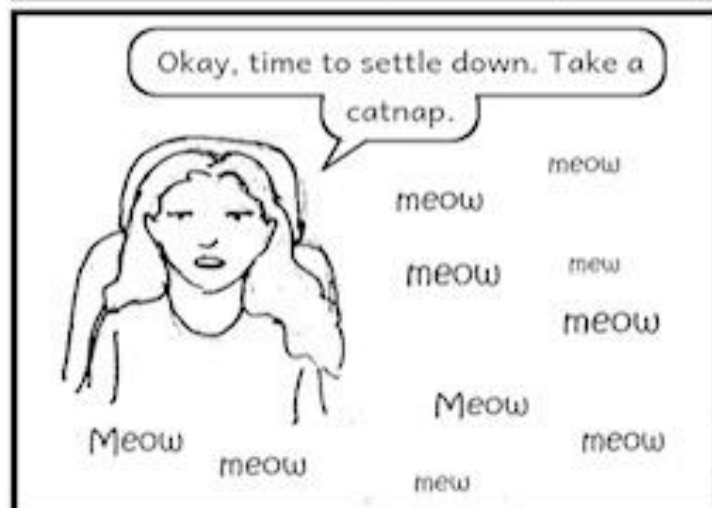
Sense of urgency comes and goes. Presently I swear I saw mine lying around here this morning. Who you calling a liar, punk? You. That's who. You. By the way, your coffee needs reheating. By the way, your microwave isn't working.

It's 37 degrees, a 30-plus-degree decrease from yesterday. O Nature, Ye Mighty Double-Crosser! We the people, beasts, created in the likeness of you. What shall we do with cold feet?

## Uncaged Melody

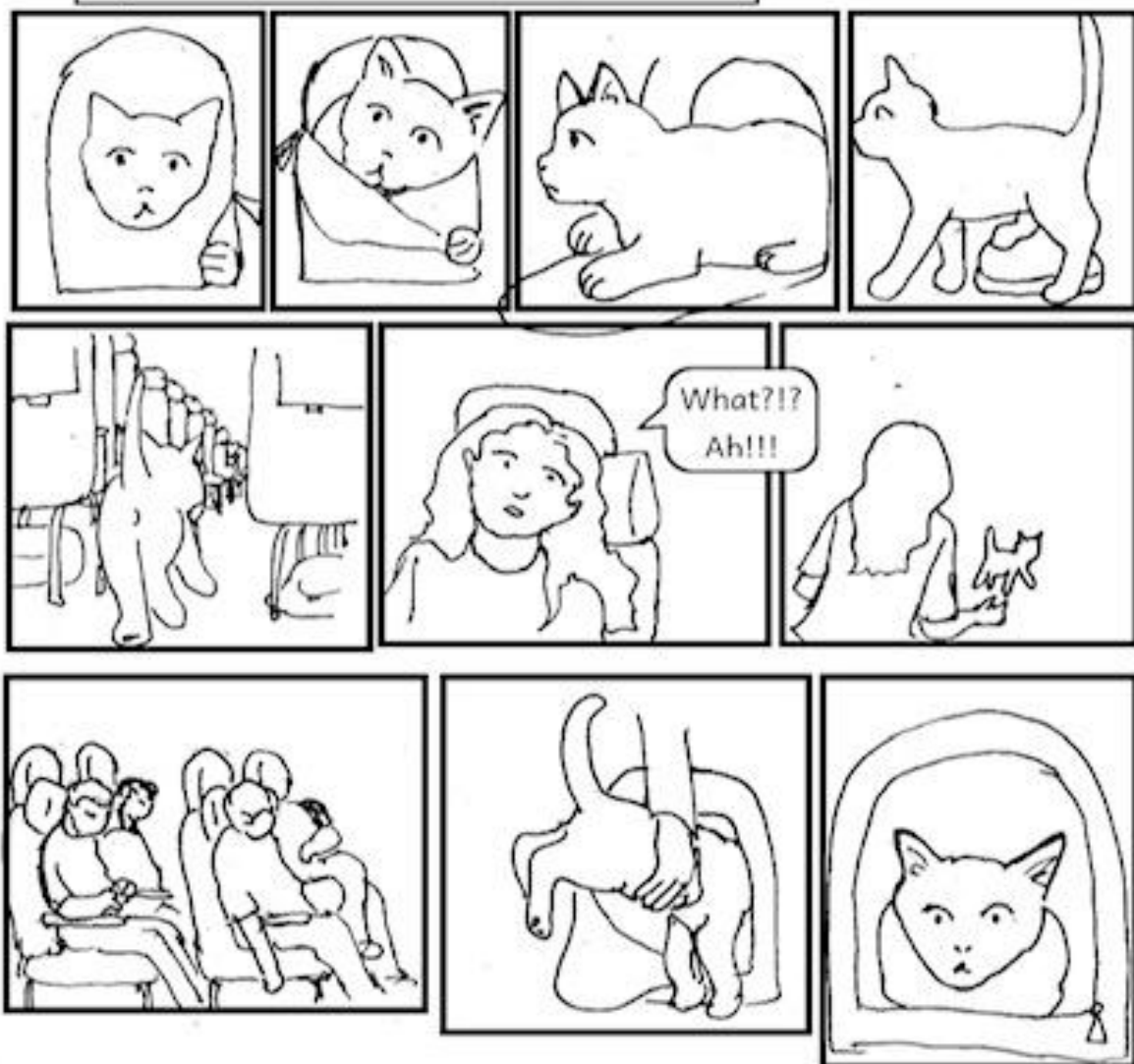
by Rick and GS Silva

Departure day! Boston, USA, to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, with connections in Toronto and Tokyo. Two adults, one child, a bunch of luggage... and one cat. One could say that Melody is a perfect cat for traveling. She was born with cerebellar hypoplasia, a neurological condition resulting from her mother having distemper during pregnancy. Melody lives a good life and she's not in pain from her condition, but she walks unsteadily and she can't run or jump. So with everything else we had to worry about, at least there was no danger of Melody making a run for it in a busy airport.



What we didn't know at the time was that this airline had an escaped cat on a plane a few days earlier. The cat ended up in the plane's ventilation equipment, and the result was a canceled flight and probably thousands of dollars lost as crews had to disassemble the cockpit to safely retrieve the cat.

Eight hours later, somewhere over the Arctic.



Fortunately, Gynn was the only one who noticed Melody's dash for freedom. Melody stayed in her carrier until airline rules forced her to transfer to cargo for the final leg of the flight from Tokyo to Ho Chi Minh City. Melody's adventures were just beginning.

Dreamtime  
By Mehreen Ahmed

In the folds of thick fog, down by the curved Bay of Moon, a stillness descended on the ocean after a swift storm had passed. As the fog slowly lifted, a boat was unveiled; it was adrift. It swerved off course. I was right under, singing a primordial tune—a blue song. A man slid off the deck and fell into the ocean. It was a leaking boat.

I watched him plop. Into the ocean, he plunged that very moment like a dollop of cream into a coffee cup—floundering. I surfaced and wagged my fin in front of him. He caught it. It slipped first, then he held it firmly in a grip. I sailed in the current's slipstream some nautical lengths until sunset in search of land. Was there any land nearby? Any show of land at all, in all the world, besides these vast stretches of the seawaters? Hope piqued, a sandy shore emerged along the Emerald Bay. I rushed towards it and reached its sandy shores within minutes. I rolled him over onto the beach in the midst of knotted weeds, oyster shells, and ponded waters cupped in footprints.

The tired man looked at me. I expelled a fountain of delight and saw how he curled up in a fetal position. In the meantime, his vessel nose-dived into the ocean as the ocean swallowed its parts in bits until all was galvanised under. His mates on the vessel were scattered on the waves like little debris as though they didn't matter.

Fate had it that I rescued this dunking man from a sunken vessel. He looked at me, and he wondered how such a miracle ride was even possible? What are you—God? Who are you? He mumbled. I smiled, somersaulted in the air, and submarined, like a vanishing blink from the stars. I resumed singing; he heard it far from the ocean's depth. Exotic to him, the tune haunted him for days on end—the blue song, he called it. Mysterious it sure was.

But the mysteries of the universe were locked in the layers of the lyrics which were decipherable through the Aboriginal dreamtime—inter-relation of all people and things—workings of nature and humanity—land and spirit. The deep connections which elude the eye—spirits more powerful which connected every life on earth such as the creatures of this blue soul.

The man waited for the saviour dolphin to return. But it never did. But it continued to convey the existential connections through its lyrics. Connections of abstraction communicated through the senses alone—through dreamtime—far beyond any human language.



Words to Live By  
By Skaja Evens

Ask for what you want  
Accept the answer could be No  
Tell the truth  
Take the leap of faith  
Don't ask the question if you don't want  
the answer  
You'll never know if you don't try  
Don't give a fuck what others think  
Use your voice  
Do the right thing  
Do what makes you happy

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Pacing  
By Kevin M. Hibshman

There aren't enough candles to burn  
until midnight.  
Not enough cigarettes to smoke until dawn.  
Pacing with the knowledge that the best years of my life are gone.

I weep into a veil that eventually shreds.  
I walk alone until all I can hear is my  
heartbeat.  
Is it me or have the surroundings changed?  
What do you do when both the red and the  
green lights look the same?

The clock always wins.  
When do we sleep enough?

Pacing with a fever.  
Rehearsing the plot.  
How will they find me?  
Nothing ever works even if it's all you've  
got.

Art by Søren Mason Temple



Art by By Luis Cuauhtémoc Berriozabal





Above: Senryu by Jerome Berglund

Below: Image by Jamie Calame





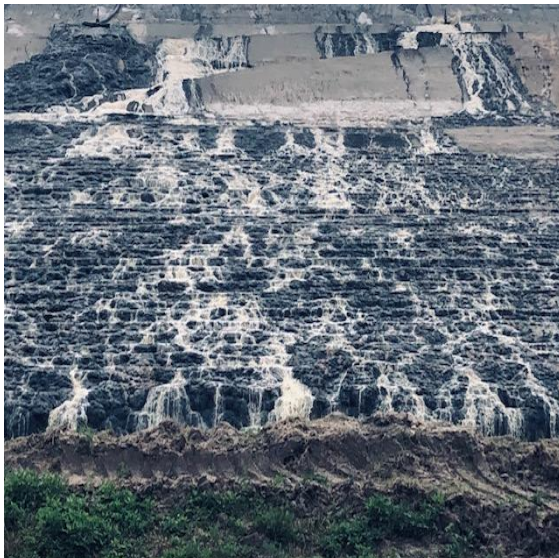
Old Memories  
By Scott Simmons

I run and you always follow.  
No matter how far I go.

All I can do is light one more.  
And wait to see who dies first.

You or me.

Images: Right: by Jamie Calame  
Below: by Trina McDaniel



Deeper Into Space  
By Kevin M. Hibshman

It's difficult to let those worlds go.  
The ones we created with our febrile breath.  
Aided by the hapless magic youth possesses.  
Their orbits decay.  
We lose them in the night sky until they are  
No longer able to be seen by the naked eye.  
We go on as do the comets in a fiery trajectory.  
Burning rapidly as we move apart.  
Deeper into space.

Image by Skaja Evens

Tequila Tuesdays  
By John Patrick Robbins

He awoke early as the ocean's natural unending music filled the room. Frank viewed the woman's body sleeping a work of art and his own, an old shipwreck. A monument to what could only be eluded to and was best left an unsolved crime scene.

Frank hacked up a lung, as usual, stepping out upon the balcony. Allie remained in the bliss of youthful slumber within the confines of their momentarily shared bed.

"You really outdid yourself this time, asshole!"

Frank didn't even turn his gaze from keeping watch over the breakers endless crashing upon the shore.

He just simply lit another cigarette and quickly handed it over to his supposedly dead friend John, as he leaned his back against the railing.

"You know, that's a hell of a bad habit you're taking up there, bud."

"Yeah well, I figure what's the worst that can happen? I most certainly can't die fucker!"

Frank didn't laugh, for John wasn't a welcome sight. He was a reminder of a constant truth he'd rather erase with whatever brain cells he had left to wash away.

"So why the hell are you even here dude, aren't you supposed to have moved to a warmer climate by now?" Frank asked, looking at his old friend.

"All that shit is just smoke and mirrors, Frankie boy. Besides, why haunt the Abyss when I can haunt you instead? I mean, it's not like you didn't have a hand in contributing to my untimely demise or anything. I mean, I don't want to make you feel guilty, you greedy bastard."

"You had issues beyond the comforts of losing a piece of ass, dude, so can the act. I mean, we both know what you chased, and eventually, that said dragon got tired of you nipping at its haunches, turned around, and burned you to a cinder. It's as simple as that."



"Oh pardon me, Mr. Perfect, I'm sorry if I took shit a bit hard when you destroyed my life because you couldn't keep it in your pants for two goddamned seconds, you cocksucker!"

Frank just kept staring out over the ocean as his temper boiled as he could barely look his old friend in the eyes.

"Remember me asking you in the very same bar in this godforsaken hotel? Remember how you couldn't even look me in the eyes, much like now? You were a chickenshit then as you are now, Frank! If it hurts you is all that matters. The truth is, Susan's departure was upon you and your desire for all this ego-driven emptiness. So how does it feel to now lay in your own proverbial shit?"

"Fuck you, motherfucker! You think it doesn't kill me, living with what I did? How was I supposed to know what would happen, you goddamned nutcase! You loved that goddamned edge and guess what, you played upon it too long and that's on you! You left us because you were every bit of selfish as I am, you cocksucker."

Frank yelled out picking up a bottle from the previous night, throwing it at his old friend as it easily passed through him crashing into the wall, shattering into a million different little pieces.

"Shhh, Frank; it seems you woke the baby."

John nonchalantly replied, pointing to the bed where Allie sat confused, staring at Frank as he was seemingly having a meltdown all by his lonesome.

As he looked to a former best friend, who was no longer there, as he stepped inside the room.

"Baby, are you alright? What's going on?"

"Good morning, sweetheart. It appears I lost my mind for a moment. No worries, it happens all the time, sugar. Go back to bed."

Frank said as Allie snuggled up against him. She didn't truly give a damn about anything more than hanging on to the moment's good time, as Frank thought of her as equally an escape and little more than anything else in return.

As she lay snuggled against him, he thought only about his former friend as they both were haunted by a living ghost of the memory that was that Amazon known as Liv.

Frank understood his old friend's emotions; he knew full well from their first meeting down in this hotel's bar that it was truly going to be a shit storm upon the horizon.

John had overdosed on that prison that was referred to as Pinewood Island, the one place he feared being trapped the most.  
It had served as his prison cell until his dying day.

And like a vulture, Frank had exploited his old friend's death in a novel that was now a bestseller. His stock was on the rise yet again. He had it all and was fucking miserable for it.

Allie was a side garnish and overrated student; a tight-bodied empty-headed dreamer who believed success could fill that void.

Success never truly corrects anything, only your bank account and an excuse to find more expensive vices.

Allie would fade out like all the rest, and Frank would become part of the very same bullshit lore he hated so much when talking about the so-called best of his generation.

Frank knew the truth would destroy his old friend's hopes, but at times catching another man's quick ticket to paradise left you with more emptiness than a painted sunset's postcard could ever mask.

John and Frank both had held upon a shared delusion and one of them had barely survived.

The lucky one wasn't kicking back drinks and chasing those who desired nothing more than an exchange in fluids and picking up the tab.

Last call would be a welcome sound to ever-worn ears on some not-so-sweet day.



At last could put the case to bed;  
File shelf away, none further said.  
Villain summed up with parting sass:  
At his noyade said, 'Kiss my ass.'

Epitaph by Jerome Berglund

Medieval motif  
By Alex Z. Salinas

*after Tomas Tranströmer*

Father and son sit across from one another  
on the sofa  
Separated by a square board.

This is their first game, or the fifth.

The father, who sips gold he'd poured into  
An ice-cold glass,  
Had recently taught his son the rules of  
engagement.

The boy, now grown,  
Remembers his father playing in an  
oil-stained uniform reeking of

Milk, although he actually wore pajama  
bottoms & a cutoff T,  
Showered and face freshly foamed.

The boy—a man—hasn't a clue who  
claimed victory,  
Although the notion is preposterous &  
beside the point.

It doesn't matter if the moon was full.

The man is certain he's battled his father  
for  
The last time  
With the sky on fire as witness.

Yet, at any time,  
Even with mountains of sand in his mind,  
The match proceeds  
Whenever he wishes.

The Hills Have Eyes  
By Luis Cuauhtémoc  
Berriozabal

The hills have eyes.  
My friend told me.  
They are watching.  
No one knows, but  
me. He said they  
will erase your  
footprints as you  
pace around in

the days the sun  
is low, in days  
too long, and days  
warmer than most.

How much do they  
see, I have no  
idea? On  
days like a dream,

they see for days  
and days, and on  
days like nightmares,  
the days have a  
certain menace.

You die those days.  
You shrink those days.  
Those are last days.  
The days you fade.



Image by Trina McDaniel

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Darkness  
By Skaja Evens

I'm most comfortable in the dark  
Where the black in my soul  
Can't be seen  
Where the angry red of my psyche is hidden

For anyone who would deem me sweet  
Don't I have you fooled?

How I'm a strong gust away from  
destruction  
You never knew  
How could you?  
I learned to bury the rage

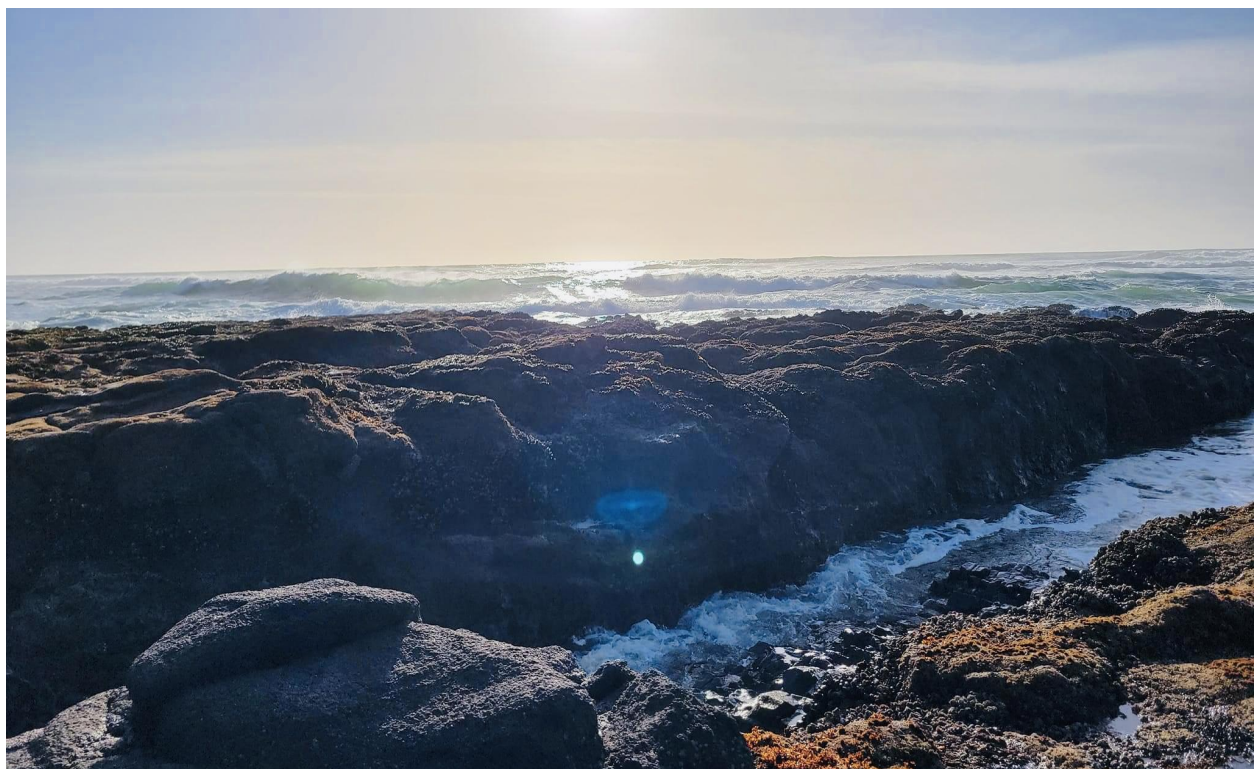
Tried to let it out long ago  
No one cared then either





Above: Art by Søren Mason Temple

Below: Image by Trina McDaniel



## Ghosts of the Great Plains

By Lauren Scharhag

My husband keeps a diecast tractor on a shelf above his desk,  
a vestige of his FFA days, much like his fondness  
for Carhartts and trucks, cinnamon rolls and chicken fried steak.

His family moved 19 times before he was 17. Both the best  
and the worst place they lived was an old farmhouse they rented  
in a small town in Miami County, population: 200.

It was the best place because it sat on a full acre of land in which  
his older brothers planted a 4H garden. Food was not always  
a guarantee for them, but there, they ate well, vegetables  
the boys could pull right from the Kansas silt loam and eat raw,  
sunflowers whose seeds they harvested, dried, and roasted with salt.

But that farmhouse was also the worst because it was home  
to many ghosts. They were plagued with all the problems you'd expect  
in a haunted house: lights and appliances flickering on and off,  
cold spots, footsteps, apparitions, the feeling of an icy hand  
on your shoulder. If they'd been watching these events unfold  
on a movie screen, it would've seemed cliché, but when it's happening  
in your living room, suddenly, all those plot elements hit differently.

Then the lease was up and it was on to the next address.  
As I think of it, that miniature John Deere, green and wheat field yellow,  
is the sole artifact he kept from those years and even now,  
he can eat a potato the way most folks eat an apple,  
and he barely has to set foot in a place to determine whether or not  
it's haunted, our present stained in the colors of our childhood,  
the perpetual love-hate relationship with the past,

and in the soil of a garden long-since gone to bindweed and thistle,  
their spade once turned up bones they quickly reburied.





Night and Morning  
By Luis Cuauhtémoc Berriozabal

Images: Above by Trina McDaniel  
Below by Jamie Calame

Three stars shine bright in the night sky.  
The moon is veiled by a white fluffy  
cloud.

From the pepper tree, a bird sings. The  
clock in the room has stopped telling  
time.

There is a brisk wind rustling the leaves.  
I can smell the flowers' fragrance in the  
garden.

When I wake up in the morning  
the three stars will be gone. The room  
will be filled with light. I will shuttle out  
of the room and the clock in the room  
will remember a time when it told time.  
A bee outside will sting me at ten am.



The Really Real  
By Skaja Evens

Image by Trina McDaniel

The facade slips. People show  
you who they are, eventually.  
Everything changes. It gets  
harder and harder, and  
harder still to trust anyone.

What's real?

The really real is rare. The  
maskless, refusing the  
expectation to fall in line.  
Logic would say they are the  
ones you believe.

But it's the facade that people  
clamor to, sometimes  
pretending because they  
know the truth. Sometimes  
believing the lie. Because the  
really real doesn't tolerate  
bullshit for long.



The truth-tellers demand you to drop the half-truths and outright lies.  
Face the darkness, find the road, confront the monsters.

Pen Pricks  
By Scott Simmons

I want tonight to be my last.  
As I stare at the empty page.

I can't find the right words to fill it.  
And each line falls flat.

But that would be far too easy.

My art is not made from self-love.

I don't want anyone's "praise."  
Or false pity as I feel none for you.

If you attempt to offer me either one,  
Then you can sincerely kiss my ass.

But no tongue, please.



Mira

By John Patrick Robbins

To transcend is to abandon everything you once held true.

I hold onto nothing I deem unnecessary as I will only break that which was fragile by design.

Hiding in the open are old truths.

Easily we find ourselves lost.

Riding out storms together.

I only know that which you tell me.

Only a fire can breathe life with death.

No one escapes unscathed.

Isolation is bliss.

Summers fade; winters linger.

Absolute is the poison.

Mindful of only the truths we share.

Enthusiasm amongst fools is perpetual.

Appreciate the sun's warmth upon cold skin.

Nothingness is simple as falls reprise.

Sworn in secret shared out of lover's spite.

Tomorrow I ask nothing in return.

Outstretched hands are pointless.

Alien are all now as simple are the flowers.

Nihilistic are the truths poison embraced fully.

Enormous are the egos who applaud.

No eyes blind can remain shut forever.

Discretion is a shared

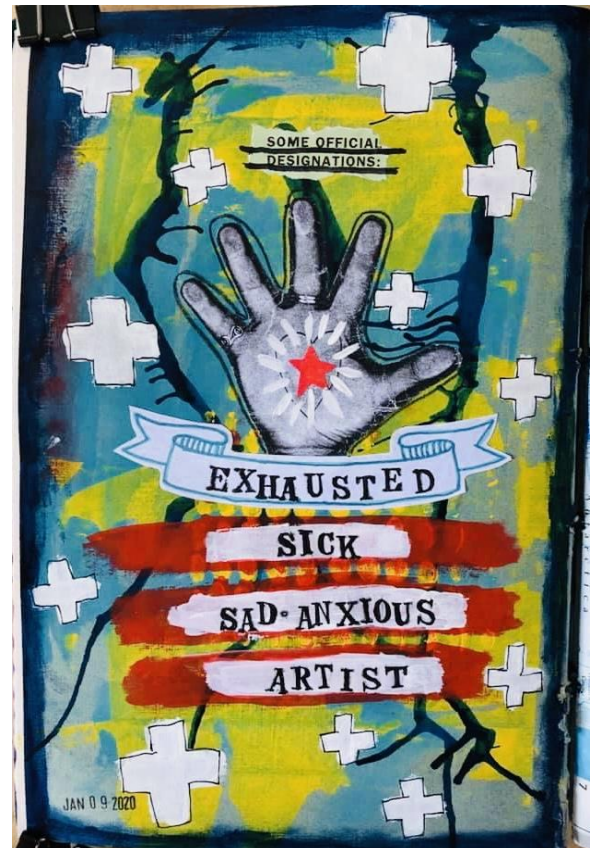


Image by Søren Mason Temple



I Don't Like You

By Scott Simmons

Did I ever ask about your feelings?

Umm let me think, no.

So, why did you tell me?

I still don't give a fuck about them.

Image by Skaja Evens



Above: Haiku by Jerome Berglund

Below: Art by Søren Mason Temple

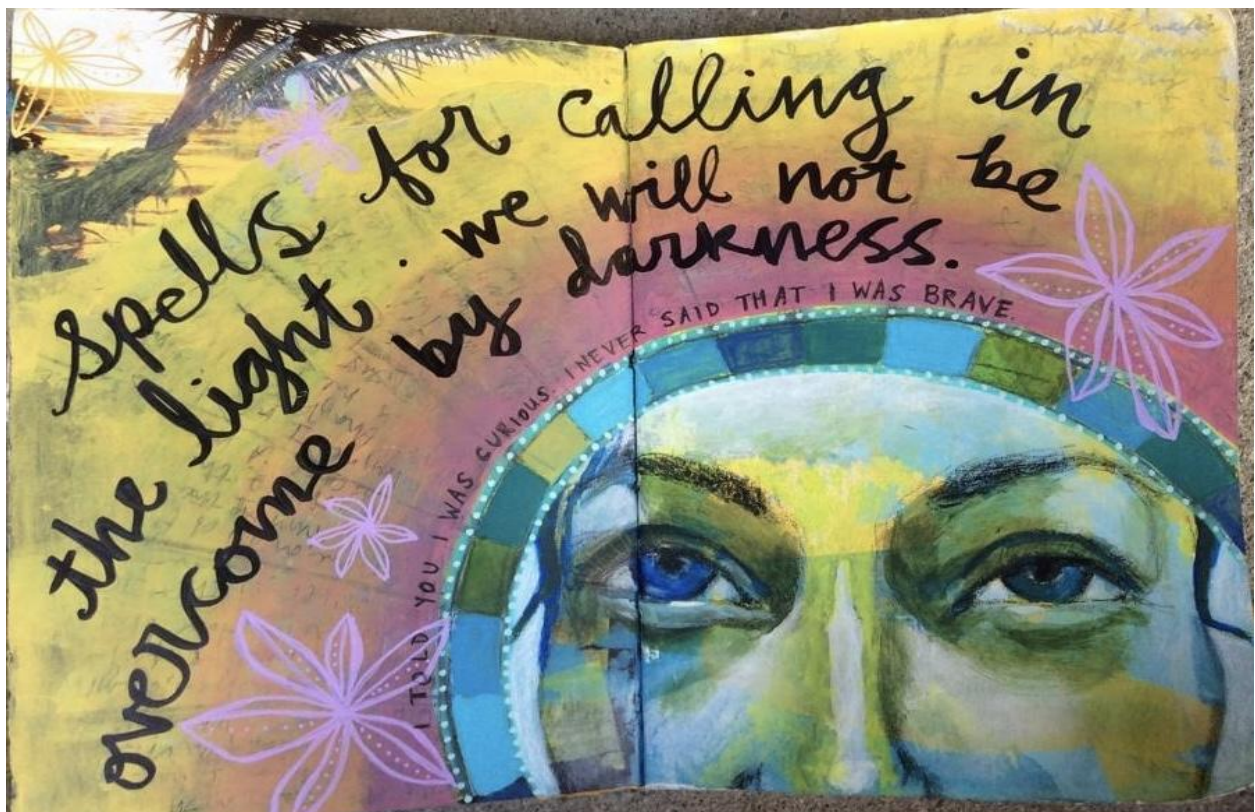






Image by Luis Cuauhtémoc Berriozabal

## Contributor Bios

**Skaja Evens** is an artist and writer living in Southeast Virginia. She's been published in The Rye Whiskey Review, Synchronized Chaos, The Dope Fiend Daily, Off The Coast, Medusa's Kitchen, and Blue Pepper. She can be found listening to music, considering the impossible, and enjoying her cats' antics.

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**John Patrick Robbins** is the editor-in-chief of the Rye Whiskey Review. His work has been published in Red Fez, San Pedro River Review, Horror Sleaze Trash, Punk Noir Magazine, Medusa's Kitchen, Piker Press, The Blue Nib, and The Dope Fiend Daily. His work is always unfiltered.

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**Trina McDaniel** is a weirdo hippie living in Eugene, Oregon where she works as a Customer Service Rep and studies witchcraft. She enjoys listening to way too many comedy podcasts, frequent walks in nature, and quick jaunts to the Oregon Coast.

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**Scott Simmons** is an "artist," humorist, and poet, and is also the editor of the Dope Fiend Daily. His work has been featured in The Rye Whiskey Review, The Anti Heroin Chic, Horror Sleaze Trash, Duane's Poetree, and The Black Shamrock. More of his "art" can be found on Instagram @deranged\_texan

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**Jerome Berglund** graduated from USC's film program and spent a picaresque decade in the entertainment industry before returning to the midwest, where he has worked as everything from dishwasher to paralegal, night watchman to assembler of heart valves. Jerome has exhibited many micropoems online and in print, he is furthermore an established, award-winning fine art photographer, whose black and white pictures have been shown in New York, Minneapolis, and Santa Monica galleries.

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**Lauren Scharhag** (she/her) is a writer of poetry and fiction. Her titles include Requiem for a Robot Dog (Cajun Mutt Press) and Languages, First and Last (Cyberwit Press). Recent honors include the Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Contest Award (finalist) and the Seamus Burns Creative Writing Prize. She has been nominated for multiple Best of the Net, Pushcart Prize, and Rhysling Awards. She lives in Kansas City, MO.  
[www.laurenscharhag.blogspot.com](http://www.laurenscharhag.blogspot.com)

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**Luis Cuauhtémoc Berriozabal** lives in California. He works in the mental health field in Los Angeles. His poetry books have been published by Pygmy Forest Press (Raw Materials), Dead Beat Press (Before and Well After Midnight), New Polish Beat (The Book of Absurd Dreams), Propaganda Press/Alternating Current Press (Songs for

Oblivion), Poet's Democracy (Peering into the Sun), and Rogue Wolf Press (Make the Water Laugh). Kendra Steiner Editions published 8 of his chapbooks.

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**Mehreen Ahmed** is an Australian novelist born in Bangladesh. Her historical fiction, *The Pacifist*, is a Drunken Druid's Editor's Choice. *Gatherings* is nominated for the James Tait Black Prize for fiction. Her flash fiction has been nominated for 3xbotN, Pushcart, and Publication of the Month. A contributor to the Best Asian Speculative Fiction Anthology 2022, her works have also been shortlisted, as finalists, and have received honorable mentions.

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**Alex Z. Salinas** is the author of poetry collections WARBLES and DREAMT, or The Lingering Phantoms of Equinox. He is also the author of a book of stories, *City Lights From the Upside Down*. His third collection of poems, *Hispanic Sonnets*, is forthcoming through FlowerSong Press. He holds an M.A. in English Literature and Language from St. Mary's University and lives in San Antonio, Texas.

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**Jamie Calame** is a disavowed ray of ebullient sunshine living in coastal Santa Cruz, California. His career trajectory takes him to industries he knows nothing about, and he enjoys every opportunity to learn about modern survival while offering unorthodox counsel to those who seek it. Outside of office life, he is a polyamorous, teetotaling, musical bicyclist who loves to capture colorful bugs and flowers by cameraphone.

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**Søren Mason Temple** creates objects to make a world she wants to live in because the one we actually have doesn't meet her standards.

**Kevin M. Hibshman** has had his poetry, prose, reviews and collages published around the world. He has edited his own poetry journal, FEARLESS for the past thirty years. He has authored sixteen chapbooks, including *Incessant Shining* (2011, Alternating Current Press). His latest books: *Just Another Small Town Story* and *The Mirror Masks Nothing*, a co-authored book with John Patrick Robbins published by Whiskey City Press, are now available on AMAZON.

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**Rick and GS Silva** have spent the last eight years living in Vietnam and China with their son and two cats. Rick teaches chemistry at an international school, and GS writes and draws the webcomic *Alien Romance*. They are originally from New England.



Image by Trina McDaniel